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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Further Cuts Ahead for Statewide Court Construction Program** *Additional Funding Reductions Will Delay Some Projects Indefinitely*

SAN FRANCISCO—The Judicial Council working group overseeing the judicial branch’s facilities program met on Wednesday in Sacramento to discuss criteria for scaling back statewide courthouse projects in light of the recent budget cuts to the judicial branch. By next year, nearly \$1.5 billion of court user fees originally designated by the Legislature to be set aside for court construction will have been borrowed, transferred to the General Fund, or redirected to court operations. This year the Legislature directed that another \$50 million be permanently diverted annually from the court construction program to trial court operations—which requires eliminating upwards of \$500 million in projects.

“The court construction program must be radically refocused to accommodate the new fiscal realities of the judicial branch and the state,” said Justice Brad R. Hill chair of the [Court Facilities Working Group](#) and Administrative Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District. “Our previous approach of reducing construction costs, while necessary and continuing, is likely to be inadequate. We now know that we will not be able to undertake all projects originally planned. I know this is distressing news for courts that have waited a long time to replace deteriorating facilities and I am committed to making this process open and transparent.

“The sad truth is that four years of deep budget cuts to the judicial branch have had and will continue to have significant impacts on court operations. These operational changes may also affect where new courthouses should be located and how large they need to be. These changes, along with significant cuts to court construction funding, dictate a fundamental relook at the slate of projects originally approved in 2008.” [Current status of SB 1407 projects listed here](#)

The working group will open a five-week public comment process to discuss potential criteria and a process to be used to reprioritize the 38 projects currently funded under [Senate Bill 1407](#). Next week, draft criteria to be used for re-evaluating the projects and a decision-making process will be posted on the California Courts website’s [Invitations to Comment page](#). The courts and the public are invited to provide written information on how the potential criteria apply to planned projects and to comment on the proposed process for selecting which projects should continue.

During a three-day open meeting of the working group in September, courts will present information about their projects, and the working group will then discuss which projects should proceed. The working group will report later in the year to the Judicial Council with recommendations on what projects to scale back or delay. Logistics for the September meeting will be posted [here](#).

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